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September 12, 2001

TO: Minerals File

THRU: Wayne Hedberg, Permit Supervisor

FROM: Paul B. Baker, Senior Reclamation Biologist

RE: Site Inspection, Cotter Corporation, Papoose Mine, M/037/084, San Juan County, Utah

Date of Inspection: August 22, 2001
Time of Inspection: 12:30-1:20 PM
Conditions: Partly Cloudy, 70's
Participants: John Showalter (Cotter Corp.) and Paul Baker

Purpose of Meeting:

The operator has been doing some exploration to the southeast of the existing mine with the idea of possibly expanding that direction, and I wanted to look at the current mine and the area to which they are planning to expand.

Observations:

To get to the site, take SR 46 east from La Sal Junction. After about six or seven miles and about two miles before getting to La Sal, there's a small building on the south side of the road with a small satellite receiver. Just west of this building, turn south for about four or five miles past the reclaimed Lisbon Valley Mine to a Y in the road. At this point, go left on the well-maintained gravel road, and you can see the quarry on the hillside across the valley.

The Papoose Mine is an active operation that mines limestone from very near the surface. Most of the limestone is used by a power plant near Nucla, Colorado, but the operator sells some riprap.

The area to which the operator plans to expand has a pinyon/juniper community with very little understory. There are a few places in the exploration area where the operator has scraped the soil back, and there is only about 3-6 inches in most areas with some places having as much as a foot.

The site is clean and should cause few environmental problems. I saw one small problem that should be corrected. Most runoff from the site is contained by berms and windrowed topsoil and is collected in a series of sediment basin with a silt fence at the outlet. The berm below the lower catch basin was breached, and the silt fences were down. Since there are no perennial or intermittent streams in the area, there should be no danger to water quality, but the silt fences and the berms should be repaired.

Mr. Showalter indicated some of the reject material may be used as substitute topsoil. While this material probably has few or no chemical limitations, it appears to be highly erodible and is likely to have little organic material or microbial activity. If possible, it would be best to use this material as a subsoil and to use either stockpiled or live hauled topsoil over it.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The sediment trap and silt fences in the northwest corner of the mine need to be repaired. Before using the reject material on a large scale as a growth medium, the operator should try it in limited areas, possibly with topsoil over it.

jb
cc: John Showalter, Cotter Corp
John Blake, SITLA
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